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Advancement of women

Bangladesh, Benin, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mali, Mongolia, Panama, Philippines, Saint Lucia and Senegal: draft resolution

Improvement of the situation of women in rural areas

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 56/129 of 19 December 2001, 58/146 of 22 December 2003, 60/138 of 16 December 2005 and 62/136 of 18 December 2007,

Recalling also the importance attached to the problems of rural women in the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women,[1] the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women[2] and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century",[3] including the review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcomes, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.[4]

Recalling further the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[5] in which Member States resolved, inter alia, to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable, and the 2005 World Summit Outcome,[6] in which they also resolved to promote gender equality and eliminate pervasive gender discrimination by taking all the necessary resolute action,

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[1] *Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

[2] Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

[3] Resolution S-23/2, annex, and resolution S-23/3, annex.

[4] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

[5] See resolution 55/2.

[6] See resolution 60/1.

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Welcoming the declaration adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-ninth session in the context of the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly,[7]

Noting the attention paid to the improvement of the situation of indigenous women in rural areas in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,[8]

Recognizing the work of relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, especially United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in promoting education for all, giving particular attention to girls and women in rural areas,

Welcoming the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development,[9] as well as the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation"),[10] in which Governments were called upon to mainstream the gender perspective into development at all levels and in all sectors, and the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development,[11]

Welcoming also the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2003 of the Economic and Social Council, adopted on 2 July 2003,[12] which stressed the need for rural development to become an integral part of national and international development policies and of activities and programmes of the United Nations system, and called for an enhanced role for rural women at all levels of rural development, including decision-making,

Recalling the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva in 2003 and Tunis in 2005 as well as the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, adopted by the World Summit in 2005,[13] which reaffirmed the commitment to building capacity in information and communications technology for all and confidence in the use of information and communications technology by all, including, women, indigenous peoples and remote and rural communities,

Recognizing the critical role and contribution of rural women, including indigenous women, in enhancing agricultural and rural development, improving food security and eradicating rural poverty,

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[7] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2005, Supplement No. 7* and corrigendum (E/2005/27 and Corr.1), chap. I, sect. A; see also Economic and Social Council decision 2005/232.

[8] Resolution 61/295, annex.

[9] *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[10] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex, and resolution 2, annex.

[11] Resolution 63/239, annex.

[12] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/58/3/Rev.1), chap. III, para. 35.

[13] See A/60/687, chap. I, sect. B.

Reiterating that eradicating poverty is the greatest global challenge facing the world today, and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, in particular for developing countries, while recognizing that rural areas of developing countries continue to be home to the vast majority of the world's poor people,

Recognizing the contributions of older rural women to the family and the community, especially, in cases where they are left behind by migrating adults or as a result of other socio-economic factors to assume childcare, household and agricultural responsibility,

Reiterating the call for fair globalization and the need to translate growth into eradication of poverty, including for rural women, and in this regard applauding the resolve to make the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including for rural women, a central objective of relevant national and international policies as well as national development strategies, including poverty eradication strategies,

Recognizing the urgent need to take appropriate measures aimed at further improving the situation of women in rural areas,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;[14]

2. *Urges* Member States, in collaboration with the organizations of the United Nations and civil society, as appropriate, to continue their efforts to implement the outcome of and to ensure an integrated and coordinated follow-up to the United Nations conferences and summits, including their reviews, and to attach greater importance to the improvement of the situation of rural women, including indigenous women, in their national, regional and global development strategies by, inter alia:

(a) Creating an enabling environment for improving the situation of rural women and ensuring systematic attention to their needs, priorities and contributions, including through enhanced cooperation and a gender perspective, and their full participation in the development, implementation and follow-up of macroeconomic policies, including development policies and programmes and poverty eradication strategies, including poverty reduction strategy papers where they exist, based on internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;

(b) Pursuing the political and socio-economic empowerment of rural women and supporting their full and equal participation in decision-making at all levels, including through affirmative action, where appropriate, and support for women's organizations, labour unions or other associations and civil society groups promoting rural women's rights;

(c) Promoting consultation with and participation of rural women, including indigenous women and women with disabilities, through their organizations and networks, in the design, development and implementation of gender equality and rural development programmes and strategies;

(d) Ensuring that perspectives of rural women are taken into account and that they participate in the design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of policies and activities related to emergencies, including natural disasters, humanitarian

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assistance, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction, and taking appropriate measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against rural women in this regard;

(e) Integrating a gender perspective into the design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of development policies and programmes, including budget policies, paying increased attention to the needs of rural women so as to ensure that they benefit from policies and programmes adopted in all spheres and that the disproportionate number of rural women living in poverty is reduced;

(f) Investing in and strengthening efforts to meet the basic needs of rural women through improved availability, access to and use of critical rural infrastructure, such as energy and transport, capacity-building and human resources development measures and the provision of a safe and reliable water supply and sanitation, nutritional programmes, affordable housing programmes, education and literacy programmes, and health and social support measures, including in the areas of sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS treatment, care and support;

(g) Strengthening measures, including increased financial resources, to accelerate progress towards the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 5 on improving maternal health through addressing the specific health needs of rural women and taking concrete measures to enhance and provide access to the highest attainable standards of health for women in rural areas, including in such areas of sexual and reproductive health as pre- and post-natal health care, emergency obstetric care, family planning information and increasing knowledge, awareness and support for the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS;

(h) Designing and implementing national policies that promote and protect the enjoyment by rural women and girls of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and creating an environment that does not tolerate violations of their rights, including domestic violence, sexual violence and all other forms of gender-based violence;

(i) Ensuring that the rights of older women in rural areas are taken into account with regard to their equal access to basic social services, appropriate social protection/social security measures, equal access to and control of economic resources, and empowerment of older women through access to financial and infrastructure services, with special focus on support to older women, including indigenous women, who often have access to few resources and are more vulnerable;

(j) Promoting the rights of women and girls with disabilities in rural areas, including by ensuring their equal access to productive employment and decent work, economic and financial resources and disability-sensitive infrastructure and services, in particular in relation to health and education, as well as by ensuring that their priorities and needs are fully incorporated into policies and programmes, inter alia, through their participation in decision-making processes;

(k) Developing specific assistance programmes and advisory services to promote economic skills of rural women in banking, modern trading and financial procedures and providing microcredit and other financial and business services to a greater number of women in rural areas, in particular female-headed households, for their economic empowerment;

(l) Mobilizing resources, including at the national level and through official development assistance, for increasing women's access to existing savings and credit schemes, as well as targeted programmes that provide women with capital, knowledge and tools that enhance their economic capacities;

(m) Integrating increased employment opportunities for rural women into all international and national development strategies and poverty eradication strategies, including by, inter alia, expanding non-agricultural employment opportunities, improving working conditions and increasing access to productive resources;

(n) Taking steps towards ensuring that women's unpaid work and contributions to on-farm and off-farm production, including income generated in the informal sector, are recognized and supporting remunerative non-agricultural employment of rural women, improving working conditions and increasing access to productive resources;

(o) Promoting programmes to enable rural women and men to reconcile their work and family responsibilities and to encourage men to share equally with women household and childcare responsibilities;

(p) Considering the adoption, where appropriate, of national legislation to protect the knowledge, innovations and practices of women in indigenous and local communities relating to traditional medicines, biodiversity and indigenous technologies;

(q) Addressing the lack of timely, reliable and sex-disaggregated data, including by intensifying efforts to include women's unpaid work in official statistics, and developing a systematic and comparative research base on rural women that will inform policy and programme decisions;

(r) Designing and revising laws to ensure that, where private ownership of land and property exists, rural women are accorded full and equal rights to own land and other property, including through the right to inheritance, and undertaking administrative reforms and other necessary measures to give women the same right as men to credit, capital, appropriate technologies and access to markets and information;

(s) Supporting a gender-sensitive education system that considers specific needs of rural women in order to eliminate gender stereotypes and discriminatory tendencies affecting them;

(t) Increasing the capacity of personnel working with national development strategies, rural development, agricultural development, poverty eradication and implementation of the Millennium Development Goals to identify and address the challenges and constraints facing rural women, including through training programmes and the development and dissemination of methodologies and tools;

3. *Urges* Governments, United Nations entities and all other relevant stakeholders to take measures to identify and address the negative impacts of the current global crises on women in rural areas, including legislation, policies and programmes that strengthen gender equality and the empowerment of women;

4. *Invites* the Commission on the Status of Women to continue to pay due attention to the situation of rural women in the consideration of its priority themes;

5. *Requests* the relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, in particular those dealing with issues of development, to address and support the empowerment of rural women and their specific needs in their programmes and strategies;

6. *Stresses* the need to identify the best practices for ensuring that rural women have access to and full participation in the area of information and communications technology, to address the priorities and needs of rural women and girls as active users of information and ensure their participation in developing and implementing global, regional and national information and communications technology strategies;

7. *Encourages* Member States, the United Nations and relevant organizations of its system to ensure that the needs of rural women are mainstreamed into the integrated process of follow-up to the major conferences and summits in the economic and social fields, in particular the Millennium Summit, World Summit on Sustainable Development, the International Conference on Financing for Development and the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus held in Doha, the 2005 review and appraisal of the progress achieved in implementing all the commitments made in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action[5] and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly[3] and the 2005 World Summit;[6]

8. *Calls upon* Member States to take into consideration the concluding observations and recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women concerning their reports to the Committee when formulating policies and designing programmes focused on the improvement of the situation of rural women, including those to be developed and implemented in cooperation with relevant international organizations;

9. *Invites* Governments, relevant international organizations and the specialized agencies to continue to observe the International Day of Rural Women annually, on 15 October, as proclaimed in its resolution 62/136;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session on the implementation of the present resolution.